

Extension shopper article for 6-14-16

New Food Labels Highlight Healthy Choices

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Information provided by Sandy Procter and James Schmidt, K-State Research and Extension*

Read any good food labels lately? Soon you'll see some changes to the Nutrition Facts Label. Sandy Procter, K-State Research and Extension nutrition specialist and registered dietitian, said she is looking forward to the changes. "This change in the Nutrition Facts Label is a long time coming," Procter said. "We're looking forward to having an improved source of information on food so consumers can make a more intelligent choice."

Highlighted changes include:

- ✓ **Calories per serving, in larger print.** The larger print makes the new label easier to read. Calories per serving will jump out at consumers to make them more aware of number of calories in *one* serving vs. the calories in the *entire package*.
- ✓ **Amount of sugar added by the manufacturer. Added sugar** is on the current label, but only shows how much sugar is in the food. This can be misleading.

"A lot of foods have natural sugar in them; case in point is milk," Procter said. "The sugar in milk, lactose, is considered part of the total sugar, but it certainly isn't **added sugar**. We don't consider it something that is going to be damaging to the diet." Another example, Procter said, is orange juice. The new added sugar line under "Total Sugars" will help consumers easily see the difference between *100 percent fruit juice and sugary alternatives*.

Another major change:

- ✓ **Potassium and Vitamin D, as nutrients of concern, will be added to the label.** Vitamins A and C, still important nutrients but usually present in healthy amounts in the diets of most Americans, will be removed.

The changes aim to make it easier for consumers to read the label, decide what is healthy for them, and get a better idea of what is actually in the food.

"We know that obesity, diabetes and weight-related health problems are some of the most threatening that the world has to tackle," Procter said. "Those public health problems need public health solutions, and this is a great step in helping the consumer to easily be able to make those decisions at the point of sale."

These changes don't go into effect immediately, but Procter says she's looking for the changes to happen soon. The changes do not apply to meat, poultry and processed egg products, as the U.S. Department of Agriculture regulates those products.

For more information, visit the [FDA website](#) or contact Barbara Roths, Family Consumer Sciences Agent, at your local Butler County Extension office, 316-321-9660, broths@ksu.edu or www.butler.ksu.edu